REPORT TO OXFORD CITY COUNCIL

Review of the Impact of Oxford City Council's Education Attainment Programme (2012 – 2014)

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SECTION 1 : EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report sets out to describe the legacy of the Education Attainment Programme (EAP) on attainment and cultural development related to learning and leadership that emerged as a result of the Oxford City Council (OCC) 2012 – 2014 project.

The OCC EAP was comprised of three interventions KRM literacy (reading and writing), KRM numeracy (mathematics) and Leadership for Learning (L for L).

In the period leading up to, and including 2011, there were a significant number of Oxford City primary schools that were performing 'below-the-floor' by national Department for Education (DfE) and local Oxfordshire standards in KS1 and 2 reading, writing and mathematics. Academic attainment in these key curricular areas was recognised to influence success in secondary school, as well as later life (after compulsory education) and therefore became a focused concern of the Oxford City Council.

The initial 11 city schools involved at the beginning of the EAP were all performing at a below-the-floor (DfE 2011) standard of fewer than 60% of children at age 11 (when they finish primary school) achieving level 4 or above in reading, writing and maths. The progression in reading, writing and maths was also below the national median expected as children progress through their KS 1 to 2 of their primary school journey.

External educational advice was sought (from various sources including a consultant, the local universities and a local educational service) to suggest how this situation might be remedied to better support children in these schools to academically improve beyond the failing levels.

To support schools in the academic challenge to improve pupils' attainment it was decided that there would be two specific areas of activity. One related to teaching important aspects of the curriculum, the other was devised to support development of senior leaders' leadership skills. The core subjects of literacy (reading and writing) and numeracy (mathematics) were the curricular focus of the interventions. There was an aspiration that key indicators of attainment recognised by the DfE and Ofsted (reading, writing and numerical performance at the end of KS 1 and KS 2) would improve as a result of the focused interventions.

To develop the three strands of specific activity (literacy, numeracy and leadership) the External Education Advisor in conjunction with some Headteachers undertook to implement the KRM literacy and numeracy programme. University Educators (from Oxford University and Oxford Brookes) tendered for and won, in line with specifications, the nature of the L for L strand. These three strands of focused activity were fashioned to comprise a two-year interventional project that supported the schools' development between January 2013 to December 2014.

The KRM literacy (reading and in some schools also writing) and numeracy intervention programmes were adopted because they offered an evidenced-based pedagogy. This approach, involving a particular kind of prescriptive teaching, was shown to improve academic attainment in reading, writing and mathematics for schools in challenging circumstances (Shapiro and Solity, 2008; 2009). The

implementation of this programme, however, was variable and it was not retained throughout the two-year intervention for the majority of the schools involved in the project.

The L for L intervention, a bespoke programme designed to support Headteachers and middle leaders offered a range of supportive activities throughout the two years. These included various lectures, seminars and workshops led by renowned, established and experienced school leaders and well-known academic researchers working in school improvement, coaching and/or leadership.
This intervention enabled school leaders to develop their confidence and competence to improve the children's attainment, increase engagement with families and develop effective collaboration with other city schools (Menter and McGregor 2015). The successful networking between schools at different levels of leadership facilitated the sharing and dissemination of a range of effective classroom and leadership strategies to tackle some common challenges faced by the City schools.

The discussion about impact in this report involves scrutiny of a range of information (from publicly available data and interviews with senior leaders) to provide more detail regarding the impact of the EAP interventional activities.

The first strand of evidence reviewed is drawn from publicly available attainment data. Academic performance achieved by the pupils in the various schools funded to engage in the three projects has been examined to establish evidence of impact. This has included consideration of different kinds of data including; attendance, numeracy and literacy achievement (available through websites such as the DfE for standards and data-dashboard information as well as Raise-on-line). Ofsted (and other external agency) reports have also been reviewed for attainment data and indications of cultural changes (such as leadership and management of teaching and learning). These data have been mapped over a 4 year period between 2011 and 2015 representing a period prior to, and for a year after, the two year EAP interventional project.

The second strand of the review has focused on Senior Leaders (including Headteachers) recollections and reflections of the impact of the project. This has provided more personal insights into accounts of cultural and attitudinal changes resulting from the three interventions. Interview data has drawn on senior leaders' reflections, including seven headteachers, a deputy head and the former education consultant leading the project. The emergent information from the review has been organised using a Guskian framework (Guskey 2000) to suggest the extent and nature of impact of the projects. This also includes consideration of more immediate and medium-term effects (after two years) on school policy, teaching and learning.

The emergent picture of impact is complex. All the schools did not engage in, and respond to all three of the interventions. The varied levels of commitment to (and engagement in) the interventions are quite closely mirrored by the extent of improvement in attainment. However, there are some anomalies where one school has significantly improved their average level 4 or above at KS 2 to 90%[1]. This is 10% above the national average and a 20% increase in performance over the last

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[1] This is from 2015 data released in February 2016. Available at http/www.raiseonline.org (accessed 15.4.16).

three years. Paradoxically this school did not participate in either the KRM literacy or numeracy interventions. The senior leadership team did, however, fully engage with the L for L programme.

One other school has also managed to achieve above the national average at KS 2, with the average level 4 or above reaching 85%[2]. This school still retains the KRM numeracy philosophy. This represents a 17% increase in performance over the last three years. The impact of KRM in this school may be as a result of a synergistic effect, as the school also participated fully in the L for L programme.

The evidence of improved attainment in the other schools suggests there are some foundational developments that were underpinned or catalysed by the interventions. Comments from senior leaders suggest a range of activities within the two-year L for L programme promoted significant changes in school policies and practices. Reflections on the KRM approach also appeared to inform pedagogic developments in some schools. The schools that maximised the opportunities afforded by the EAP interventions revealed quite significant cultural shifts in their ethos, beliefs and actions that have permeated down to impact on pupil achievement. Where there is less impact, there has been significant staffing (including senior teacher) 'churn', e.g.: Headteacher retiring or moving to a different school.

Currently (in 2016) there are four schools that have improved their Ofsted grade. Given that this has occurred during a time when Ofsted have implemented a new inspection framework which is far more exacting than the previous one, this is a significant achievement. One school has even moved from a Grade 4 (Unsatisfactory) to Grade 2 (Good) in four years. This is a very impressive improvement noted by the local press and acknowledged nationally by the DfE with the school being recognised as one of the ten most improved schools in the country. This school did not participate in the KRM programme. The other three schools now recognised as Grade 2 (Good) were previously recorded as Grade 3 in 2010.

There is also a significant improvement in the percentage of pupils 'making progress' in the Oxford City schools. In all schools except one, they have now reached 100%[3] in either reading, writing or mathematics.

Reports from Ofsted inspections, interviews with Headteachers and inferences from other external sources indicate how less explicit leadership skills have been improved. There has been impact involving 'softer skills' such as leader confidence; leader's self-belief; more effective collaboration through-out the schools; more focused diagnostic skill development; more effective problem-solving; better understanding of performance data; tacit Professional Development (PD); more effective communication skills and even more effective distributed leadership.

A range of factors have heightened the academic challenge for the City primary schools. These include a rise in attainment targets set by the Government, an increase in pupil numbers (most well beyond the national average), additional

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[2] This is from 2015 data released in February 2016. Available at http/www.raiseonline.org (accessed 15.4.16).

[3] This is from 2015 data released in February 2016. Available at http/www.raiseonline.org (accessed 15.4.16).

demands for SEN provision, higher percentages of FSM children and also large numbers of youngsters that do not use English as their first language.
Despite this there is clear evidence presented in this report that suggests how many different aspects of academic improvement is on an upward trajectory, with several schools performing beyond DfE expectations. These developments have been strongly influenced and supported by the OCC EAP and should be celebrated.

SECTION 2 : INTRODUCTION

In January 2016 Oxford City Council commissioned Oxford Brookes University to carry out an evaluative review designed to investigate two specific questions :

What impact did Oxford City Council's Education Attainment Programme (OCC EAO) which involved the KRM literacy and numeracy programme and the Leadership for Learning programme) have on:

(1) the culture around attainment
*   and*
(2) schools' ambitions for students' attainment?

The review also includes the mapping of trends in data over a four-year period between 2011 and 2015 and includes some aspects of personal accounts from interviewed Headteachers or senior leaders.

This evaluation draws on the reports already presented to the City Council (regarding KRM literacy and numeracy and L for L) which is supplemented by more recently available evidence (regarding 2015 performances in 2016) from OfSTED reports, DfE (Department for Education) performance tables, including the DfE data dashboard information and raise-on-line. and interviews with a range of senior leaders involved in and/or aware of the impact of the Attainment Programme. The interviewees included a former Educational Advisor to the City Council, two former Headteachers involved in the interventions for the first year, a current head and deputy head who were more involved latterly in the interventions. These accounts were supplemented by the views of four leaders who have been heavily involved through-out the 2011 – 2015 period.

Two of the leaders interviewed are from schools that have continued to use the KRM philosophy in their Numeracy teaching. One deputy head was from a school that began to use KRM literacy and then withdrew (ceased in its involvement) as the Headteacher and other trained staff moved to different schools (some beyond Oxford). Four other leaders interviewed were heavily committed to the L for L programme and shared their views of the impact of this in their schools.

i.   National Context :

The OCC EAP project took place during a period of major national educational change. In 2010 a new Coalition Government was elected, they were (and the subsequent Conservative Government is still) focused heavily on the goal of raising standards in Schools. During the project period there were several significant changes in national policy that presented leadership and management challenges, for example :

- More rigid and challenging Ofsted grading criteria were introduced placing greater requirements on schools to reach the required 'Good' category. BBC

News (2010) reported that revised inspection criteria, which were introduced in September 2009, resulted in a reduction from 19% to 9% in the number of schools judged to be Outstanding, and an increase from 4% to 10% in the number of schools judged to be Inadequate.

- During this period there were many changes to the Ofsted focus of inspections as well as the criteria that needed to be reached to achieve the various categories. In 2012 wider ranging criteria were introduced which, for example, looked more specifically at levels of attainment of pupils, their rate of academic progress through the key stages and their behaviour and attendance. The third Ofsted category 'Satisfactory' was altered to 'Requires improvement' (that instigated more regular inspections). The criteria that had to be met to achieve 'Outstanding' or 'Good' outcomes from inspections required more effective leadership and management from Headteachers. During this time 'Coasting' schools were identified as those that may be compelled to become Academies. The picture since 2015 has become even more complex with the prospect that even 'Good' schools may be involved in more frequent inspections.

There were many other external factors (related to Educational Policy changes during the two-year period 2012 - 2014) that also impacted on the Schools participating in the projects and compounded leadership, teaching and learning challenges. Some of these included :

- Preparation and planning for a new revised national curriculum (documentation issued by DfE in 2013 for implementation in September 2014)
- Changed national testing and assessment arrangements (the introduction of new baseline testing etc)
- The new Children and Families Act that significantly changed SEN policy (requiring rapid changes in provision during 2015 to offer better support **all** learners)
- New (and more regular annual) measures of children's progress (since 2012)
- Performance related pay (examining teacher performance and achievement of their pupils to determine their pay)
- General recruitment and retention issues to secure quality teaching staff to work in schools in challenging circumstances.

Not only did the Headteachers have to contend with a changing and challenging national political landscape, there were also local issues that they needed to take account of in leading their schools.

ii.   Local Context:

Within Oxford City Headteachers also needed to contend with a range of local issues including :

- Rising numbers of children of primary school age (well above the national average, see Table 1);
- Significant increase in the proportion of English not as a first language pupils (see Appendix 2);
- Increase in the demand for SEN provision (see Appendix 3);
- Increase in the numbers of FSM children (see Appendix 4);
- Increased devolution of funding to schools, whose leaders are not necessarily experienced managers of significant public funds.

The general provision of primary education for a growing pupil population (see Table 1 illustrating the Numbers) meant that in 2012 only two schools enjoyed a lower than average number of pupils in their school. Five schools had over 150 more children than the national average to cater for. In 2014, all the City schools (apart from one) were educating (between several and even hundreds) more children than the national average primary school population!

School	Pupil Number (2012)	Difference to National average	Pupil Number (2014)	Difference to National Average
School A	404	+153	432	+169
School B	476	+225	465	+202
School C	241	-10	267	+4
School D	321	+70	318	+55
School E	445	+194	456	+193
School F	345	+94	382	+119
School G	488	+237	488	+ 225
School H	301	+50	322	+59
School I	244	-7	244	-19
School J	-		365	+102
School K	287	+36	330	+67
National average (England) for primary schools	**251**		**263**	

Table 1 : To show the changes in number of pupils in the 11 City schools over the two years of the OCC EAP interventional project. Source : http://dashboard.ofsted.gov.uk/.

Attendance challenges

This still remains problematic in most Oxford City schools. The 2014/5 (DfE 2014/5) data showed that attendance at School J fell into the bottom 20% percent for all schools in the Country at 94.7%. School K was also in this lowest category (the fifth quintile) for attendance. The data for School G indicated a slight improvement placing it in the bottom 40% of schools in the Country. The data for School H showed an improvement and it was in the middle 20% for all schools. School I is the only one where levels of attendance have been good, they have shown year-on-year improvements.

Changes in Headteachers during and since the OCC EAP
During the two-year interventional project there were many changes of Headteacher. Table 2 (below) indicates the extent to which Headteachers reportedly changed. Only three (however one took maternity leave for several months, therefore requiring a different interim Head) retained the same Headteacher over the interventional project period of two years. The Headteacher's leadership in decision-making and commitment to the KRM and L for L interventions influenced the extent to which schools engaged with and implemented the OCC professional development provision. At several schools, changes in Head, resulted in the cessation of involvement in the interventions. This is discussed later in the report.

Oxford City Schools involved (at varied levels) in the attainment project	Number of Headteacher changes since 2012
School A	At least 1
School B	At least 1
School C	0
School D	At least 2
School E	1
School F	At least 4
School G	At least 2
School H	0 (temporary interim)
School I	At least 1
School J	At least 3
School K	0

Table 2 : Indications of changes in Headteacher during the period of the OCC EAP project. *As of February 2016. Source : Raise-on-line available at https://www.raiseonline.org.

Teacher staffing issues

During the project many schools experienced several staff shortages limiting the availability of staff to attend the EAP interventional project events. Between 2013 and 2014 one school appointed 11 new members of staff. In Oxford, specifically and nationally, there appears to be a very high staff turnover in schools placed in challenging circumstances, e.g. : the three schools comprising the Blackbird Academy, where there was a turnover of 75% of staff over a summer period (Wright 2014 : 67).

The impact of staff turbulence in many of the participating Schools is reflected in the extract below, taken from the OfSTED report for School B School.

"School B is a larger than average primary school serving the Cowley area of Oxford with approximately 470 children on roll including 60 nursery places. Over half the children are from minority ethnic backgrounds. The number of pupils with specific needs is above average. Since the last inspection there have been major changes in staffing, a large number of the teaching staff having been appointed within the last three years. Most significant are the changes in leadership as, following a period of instability, the present head teacher has been in post since September 2013 and most members of the governing body are new. Following **a recent period of turbulence within both leadership and staffing**, the new headteacher, working in close partnership with governors, parents and children has created within the school a warm and embracing culture"

A recent report (Weale 2016) in the Oxfordshire Guardian contained a report on teacher shortage in the County. This is an issue that obviously compounds and exacerbates all the previous factors influencing the challenges in running an effective school.

Re-organisation and restructuring

Alongside all the previously mentioned challenges, a number of Oxford City schools had been involved in major restructuring (and significant building works during the 2012 – 2014 period). Six of the eleven schools involved in the Leadership for Learning (L f L) project now operate as Academies.

Oxford City Schools involved (at varied levels) in the attainment project	2012	2014/15
School A	LA Primary School	Part of the Cheney School Academy Trust
School B	Voluntary Controlled C of E Primary School	Voluntary Controlled C of E Primary School
School C	LA Primary School	Part of the Cherwell School Academy Trust now the River Learning Trust
School D	LA Primary School	State Primary School
School E	LA Primary School	State Primary School
School F	LA Primary School	Part of Blackbird Leys Academy Trust
School G	LA Primary School	Part of Blackbird Leys Academy Trust
School H	C of E Primary School	C of E Primary School
School I	Catholic Primary School	Catholic Primary School
School J	LA Primary School	Part of Blackbird Leys Academy Trust
School K	LA Primary School	State Primary School (whole school rebuilt)

Table 3 : To indicate the process of re-organisation of the school's status during the 2012 – 2014 interventional project period.

Below-the-floor performance of the Oxford City Schools

The academic performance that children in primary schools were expected to achieve (DfE 2012) were laid out as targets that were measurable at the end of primary school (KS 2) in terms of attainment in English (reading and writing) and mathematics. The performance of the schools prior to being involved in the OCC project is summarized below :

	2008 English and Maths	2009 English and Maths	2010 English and Maths	2011 English and Maths		
	2008	2009	2010	2011	Average over 4 years	Number of times below floor
School A	47	39	37	65	47.00	3
School F	54	44	-	43	47.00	3
School J	49	43	43	58	48.25	4
School D	58	58	51	36	50.75	4
School K	40	40	62	68	52.50	2
School E	49	61	-	48	52.67	2
School B	55	44	53	74	56.50	3
School I	67	59	44	63	58.25	2
School H	66	63	54	62	61.25	1
School C	72	67	61	58	64.50	1
School G	58	69	69	65	65.25	1

Table 4 : The Below-The-Floor performance of the Oxford City Schools (organized according to average attainment score).

The (averaged) attainment levels at KS 2 in English and mathematics of Oxford City Schools prior to the OCC EAP interventional project are shown in Table 4. The final column indicates the number of times the school had failed to reach the expected level of achievement with 60% or more of learners achieving the expected level of attainment in the Key Stage 2 tests. Source : Report to Oxford City Council Scrutiny Committee. May 2013.

SECTION 3 : THE AIMS OF THE EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT PROGRAMME (EAP)

With at least 11 city primary schools performing 'below-the-floor' (DfE 2011) level in their KS 2 performance the determination to support and improve the academic attainment of the children in the city resulted in the setting of ambitious targets. The challenge of the EAP was for primary schools which serve the most disadvantaged communities to improve attainment at the end of KS 1 and 2, by 10% above the national average. This meant aiming for :

• 95% achieving level 2 in Reading at age 7 (at the end of Key Stage 1) and

• 84% achieving Level 4 in English and Maths at age 11 (at the end of Key Stage 2)

These targets were to be achieved by 2016 or 2017.

The decision taken at City level (in consultation with some headteachers) to adopt the KRM Literacy and Numeracy instructional programmes to facilitate this improvement was because the research evidence indicated the approach could enhance reading, writing and numeracy skills in children from disadvantaged communities (Shapiro and Solity 2008; 2009). The evidence base suggested that the KRM approach using real books and focusing on phonics could result in :
- raised attainment of all children, not only lower achieving pupils;
- approximately 80% of children developing reading ages ahead of their chronological ages instead of the expected 50%;
- the incidence of reading difficulties should be reduced from the expected 20-25% to approximately 2-3%;
- more children than expected will have a reading age 12 months or more ahead of their chronological age.

To develop school leaders' leadership skills, the two local Universities and a Local Educational Consultancy (formerly Education Excellence in Oxfordshire) designed a leadership programme to assist school leaders in delivering on the ambitions for raised attainment in the City.

The objectives achieved in this aspect of the EAP programme have already been reported to the City Council (Menter and McGregor 2015). There was evidence that the L for L intervention :

i. Raised attainment through enabling Headteachers to become more effective in leading improvements in teaching and learning and in developing school-community partnerships.

ii. Raised engagement with families through various strategies.

iii. Significantly improved confidence in school leaders: through the development of inquiry-led, research-informed leadership, through collaboration both within and

outside the school. Their learning emerged through action-based developments, that set out manageable targets for improvement that could be reviewed and disseminated within the project.

iv. Increased strength and depth of leadership: through the involvement of school leaders at core events, seminars and other participatory events.

v. Promoted a strong collaboration across schools whereby the leaders worked effectively with each other on shared or mutual concerns creating collective understanding of possible solutions to common issues.

SECTION 4 : THE NATURE OF THE INTERVENTIONAL PROJECT

   i.   **THE KRM Initiatives**
      a. **Literacy**
      b. **Numeracy**

The outline of the KRM programme (literacy and numeracy) was presented to the scrutiny committee report (Wright 2014 : p.66).

It is indicated here that there was variation in the extent to which schools were involved in the KRM initiative. The dates (and terms) they were noted to engage with the training are summarised below :

Schools	Programme	Dates in the KRM programme	Number of terms
School D	KRM Reading and Writing	Jan 2013 to July 2014	5
School E	KRM Maths	Nov 2012 to Sept 2014	5.5
School H	KRM Maths	Jan 2013 to Sept 2014	5
School F	KRM Reading	April 2013 to July 2014	4
School G	KRM Reading	April 2013 to July 2014	4
School J	KRM Reading	April 2013 to July 2014	4
School I	KRM Reading	April 2013 to Dec 2013	2

Table 5 : The schools involved in KRM training. Source : Public Reports Pack 06102014 1800 Scrutiny Committee p.66

There were a number of organisational changes required (such as timetabling the teaching of literacy and numeracy 3 times a day) to implement KRM successfully in the schools. It was problematic for some of them to ensure all teachers were able to engage with the training programme. There were also tensions with the LA support that was being provided for Oxford City and Oxfordshire schools regarding the alternate approaches to teaching and learning in maths. The county approach did not chime with the philosophy and pragmatics of the KRM strategy for improving mathematical attainment.

One school also indicated how the resources for the literacy (reading and writing) intervention were well documented and provided in good time, but that the mathematics programme had perhaps not been running as long and did not have readily available the same extent of substantial teaching materials. There was also comment about the lack of electronic resources for the KRM programme. Some teachers were surprised that the materials were only available in printed form.

A real highlight for many learning how to apply the KRM materials was a visit to a Brixton school where the teachers were able to watch KRM being taught. Visiting a

> Educational Advisor describing the visit to see KRM in-action :
>
> during the second year was a visit to a school in Brixton, in one of the poorest areas of Brixton who had been doing KRM for three years and then getting a hundred percent of their children through English and maths. And I think nearly all of the KRM schools came on that visit, and we saw the KRM teaching in every classroom, they were doing English, reading,

school to see a new way of doing something 'in situ' was very useful professional development.

One headteacher indicated, however, she had to organise (and fund) additional training for her staff to feel competent and confident to 'deliver' with the new KRM philosophy.

ii.   LEADERSHIP FOR LEARNING

This programme took place over two years from January 2012 to January 2014.

The report of the implementation and immediate impact of this programme was documented in a previous report to the OCC scrutiny committee by Prof Menter and McGregor in January 2015. It is, however, useful to reiterate the extent to which the schools engaged with the L for L programme (see Table 6).

Great efforts were made to re-engage the three schools in the Blackbird Leys Academy Trust schools, but the continuing changes in staff and the need for new leadership teams to establish themselves *in situ*, prevented colleagues taking up the programme. Similarly School D participation did not continue into the second year, following changes to its leadership team.

Oxford City Schools involved (at varied levels) in the attainment project	Participated in Leadership for Learning
School A	Participation 2012 - 2013
School B	Participation 2012 - 2014
School C	Participation 2012 - 2014
School D	Participation 2012 - 2013
School E	Participation 2012 - 2014
School F	Participation 2012 - 2013
School G	Participation 2012 - 2013
School H	Involved throughout the two years, but a little disrupted by Head's maternity leave.
School I	Full participation 2012 - 2014
School J	Some involvement 2012 - 2013
School K	Participation 2012 - 2014

Table 6 : To indicate the relative extent of engagement with the L for L programme.

Critical issue of involving Headteachers who moved on

The cessation of involvement of schools in both programmes (see Tables 5 and 6) occurred as a result of some Heads leaving their schools. New in-coming Headteachers who did not have experience of the KRM Literacy or Numeracy training or the L for L were unlikely to continue to support the staff implementing the

new approaches and innovative ideas because they were unfamiliar with them, as the former Educational Advisor (2016) explained, "some of them had two heads a year, they put in an interim head…those were quite important because [..in some cases…] the interim head stopped the program. I think that was one of the critical challenges. People we engaged at the beginning …… they weren't the same people at the end".
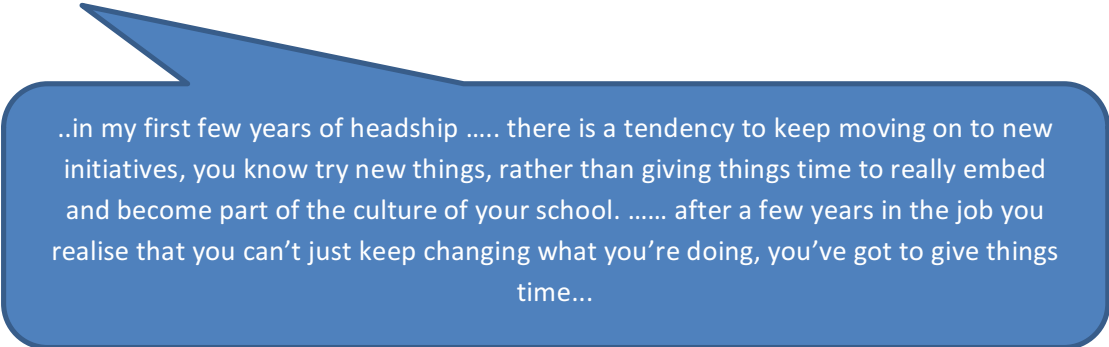
SECTION 5 : THE APPROACH TO REVIEWING IMPACT OF THE INTERVENTIONS FOR THIS REPORT

A well used and widely recognized approach to judging the effect of an intervention is the Guskian (2000) model of impact. The Guskian model involves assessing impact at five different levels. These include :

    i.   Participant reaction to the intervention(s)
    ii.   Participant learning from the intervention(s)
    iii.   Organisational support and change that emerges from implementing the intervention(s)
    iv.   Participants use of new knowledge and skills developed through the intervention(s)
    v.   Pupil learning outcomes as a result of (implementing) the intervention

This section of the report will consider first the five levels of impact of the KRM Literacy and Numeracy jointly and then Leadership for Learning. To describe these differentiated levels of impact, several existing documents were scrutinised, provided by OCC that reported on the KRM and the Leadership for Learning projects; publicly available data (from the DfE; Raise-on-line etc) and interviews (including a former Educational Advisor; two heads who were familiar with (and part of the first year of the projects), a current head and a deputy head who were involved throughout the two years. Information from previous interviews with an additional four Headteachers were also drawn upon to inform this report.

At this point in the report, it is worth mentioning that several Headteachers who were interviewed, re-iterated that when embarking upon some new policy or practice in their school, they had to consider not only whether the new initiative was appropriate to take on but to also be prepared to embed the change and then wait sometime for subsequent outcomes to improve learning. This is indicated below by a Headteacher who has been in post for several years.

> ..in my first few years of headship ….. there is a tendency to keep moving on to new initiatives, you know try new things, rather than giving things time to really embed and become part of the culture of your school. …… after a few years in the job you realise that you can't just keep changing what you're doing, you've got to give things time…

a. The KRM Literacy and Numeracy

i.Participant reaction to the programmes

When the Headteachers, classroom teachers, literacy and numeracy co-ordinators and governors were first introduced to these programs they were provided with

evidence that the application of KRM in the classroom could potentially improve the below-the-floor levels of attainment.

The documented evidence of impact of the intervention provided persuasive indications that it could enable poorly performing Oxford City schools to significantly improve their children's academic performance in literacy and numeracy.

Several schools that initially embarked on implementing KRM (for example School I and School D applied KRM literacy; School H and School E adopted KRM numeracy) but did not necessarily continue beyond the two year intervention with it. Teachers from all the schools initially engaged in the introductory sessions and could then opt to be involved in further training sessions provided to become familiar with the materials and appreciate how to teach literacy/numeracy using the KRM methodology and methods in their particular school. Some schools chose not to implement the complete KRM approach after attending the introduction/workshop/INSET sessions when they had time to consider fully the practical implications of implementing the new methods their particular classrooms.

Although some Heads had some reservations about the highly structured KRM approach, the prescriptive nature of the lessons and the three-times a day requirement, several (including School I and School D) tried to implement it as directed.

Many teachers, though, were resistant to the precise and very specific way of teaching that KRM insisted was necessary to implement the approach successfully. Tensions developed because there were quite different existing philosophies in the schools where County wide initiatives, such as the 'Oxfordshire Reading Campaign' or the 'Story telling' approach were being implemented.

KRM provided for some teachers an effective *teaching* programme, especially new entrants to the profession. The materials and lesson structures were very clear and provided immediately usable resources, gave precise and explicit instructions to be followed to teach literacy/numeracy. Younger, less experienced teachers were therefore confident in delivering this approach (because the classroom resources materials were already prepared).

Younger (and SEN) children appeared to respond particularly well to the iterative, tightly prescriptive and progressively incremental way that phonics knowledge and skills were presented and then practiced (three times a day) in the KRM classes.

The numeracy programme had not been quite so extensively researched and the teaching materials so robustly tried and tested with children of a range of abilities. This appeared to offer (mathematics) subject co-ordinators some flexibility to 'make-it-work' in their schools by generating additional guidance for their teaching staff where there were few KRM resources.

However, some more experienced teachers found the tightly prescribed KRM approach too constraining and felt they lost autonomy in making curricular and pedagogical decisions about what was best to teach their children (and how to effectively differentiate for the diversity of learners in the classroom). They felt they were not able to exercise their professional know-how as they were not able to

choose the reading resources to focus, for example, on developing *their* childrens' phonics skills.

The experience, though, of engaging in (or considering) quite a 'different' teaching programme that involved quite distinctive perceptions (and measures) of learning is very useful professional development activity for the teachers. For all reflective teachers involved there would be pedagogical, management and leadership learning outcomes from the experience, even if they did not continue to implement the literacy (and numeracy) intervention in the longer term.

ii. Participant learning

The teachers and Heads involved in the KRM training became aware of the clear evidence regarding improvements in reading and writing attainment that a precise and prescriptive approach to teaching could bring about.

Previously there appeared to be an attitude that nothing could be done for these pupils. Schools appeared to adopt a view that '….the children couldn't succeed for a huge range of reasons, that they [the schools] didn't have enough money, that the areas were too poor and the children […had...] such a low level of skill and had so many challenges in their lives that they couldn't be expected to reach the standards that the government, the City and the County were expecting" (Former Education Advisor to the City Council 2016).

Professional discussions about the different ways that various teaching approaches could improve performance became more prevalent. On a "visit to … Brixton one of the poorest areas [a school] who had been doing KRM for three years and … getting a hundred percent of their children through English and maths […] we saw the KRM teaching in every classroom, they were doing English, reading, writing and maths…. we could see this was an incredibly poor community with high-rise flats …. a hundred languages were spoken, [….] Anyway you know it was clear it was possible to achieve [better] results with children" (former Oxford City Council Education Advisor 2016).

More Heads and teachers, therefore became aware that it was possible to develop pedagogies to help children from poorer, deprived and impoverished backgrounds to succeed academically. This is echoed later by the significant 'making progress' achievements (in Table 11) evidenced in the schools.

iii.Organisational support and change

To implement these two interventions, a daily (and weekly) change in classroom organisation, practice and resources was required because the approaches were so prescribed that three distinct short sessions (of varying lengths were to be taught within the same day). There was a very structured taught programme that has to be presented at a particular pace and specific content. This created tensions in some of the schools.

Although the schools were each invited to participate in professional development to support this initiative, these events were 'presentational' and held centrally. The schools who wished for support to have customised advice and individual teacher support had to fund this additional professional development themselves. Where

headteachers (and their staff) felt this was appropriate resources could be found). However, many experienced teachers found the KRM approach did not resonate with their beliefs about good practice, where they knew they needed to differentiate for particular pupils rather than teach as if 'one size fits all' (Head's quote).

Another tension in the implementation of the KRM, was exemplified by a request from a Headteacher who had been very keen on the KRM reading program. However, her school later discontinued the KRM because it was not appropriate to continue with guided reading in the school at the same time. Having to make choices about one intervention over another, rather than 'blending' pedagogies, meant that the continuation of KRM was difficult for schools wishing to use additional and/or alternate materials for reading.

iv.Participants use of new knowledge and skills developed through the intervention

The experience of considering how to implement a philosophically very different teaching and learning programme enhanced the pedagogical (and professional) know-how for managing and leading change with other new (curricular or resourcing) initiatives.

It also appeared that younger children responded better to the 'chanting', fast-paced and at times rote-learning type of KRM approach.

Although the philosophy of KRM is still followed by two schools, there has been a need to develop 'follow-on' material that relates the focus of those lessons to the current demands of the National Curriculum.

v.Pupil learning outcomes

One headteacher (of a 'Good' school) explained how "Our year six results last year were very low but we kind of knew about that and we had a difficult time, we got six children moved into us from other schools in the area who were struggling and they were all the lowest children. So if you just [reviewed] league tables it would look like our year 6 results have gone down a lot. However, our in-school-progress is much better. If you are looking at year 2, across year 2 they made the most amount of progress, then year 3, and therefore attainment in year 6 should improve over the next 3 - 4 years".

So, although there wasn't an immediate positive impact of the intervention on pupils' performance, there were signs of improvement and the beginnings of more upward trajectories. The ways that headteachers strategized for longer-term gain, is explained by this Headteacher of a 'Good' school, "our focus was never on that year six because we knew we had very low KS1 results so the expectation was that that would be low but what we needed to do was to make sure that we raised expectations in years 5, 4, 3 so that we could sustain and raise achievement over time". This appears to be slowly coming to fruition now for several of the schools.

The performance of Key Stage 1 children (aged 5 – 7) at the end of 2014 are summarised in Table 9. There are obvious indications here that the younger children appear to benefitting, from changes implemented in these classes and are able to perform at increasingly higher levels. The Oxford City schools' performance has

improved (by 2014) at Key Stage 1, with 81% of pupils overall academic performance at level 2 or above in reading, writing and maths. Pupils academic attainment varies from school to school, but the children at School C, School K and School E all achieved greater than 90%. This reflects significant progress given three schools (School C, School K and School E) previous below floor performances (evidenced in Table 6).

Programme	KS1 Level 2+ Reading				KS1 Level 2+ Writing				KS1 Level 2+ Maths			
	2011	2012	2013	2014	2011	2012	2013	2014	2011	2012	2013	2014
Leadership for learning only	71	77	81	63	71	71	73	79	83	81	86	87
Leadership for learning and KRM	67	78	78	81	60	67	77	80	67	84	86	92
Project schools	69	78	79	82	62	68	76	78	78	82	86	90
Oxford	78	83	85		82	77	83		87	86	90	
Oxfordshire	86	88	89		80	83	86		90	91	93	
England	85	87	89		81	83	85		90	91	91	

Table 7 : Table to summarise generalized improvements at KS 1 in Reading, Writing and Mathematics. Source : Scrutiny Committee Meeting Report : Review of the Educational Attainment Programme including KRM (Wright 2014 p. 6).

This table of data indicates how progress has been initiated during the 2011 to 2014 period, but the target of 95% achieving level 2 in reading has not yet been reached. Scrutiny of the 'making progress' data, indicates a very much more mixed picture at KS 1 in 2014.

Table 8 illustrates how, in 2014, there was some progress in supporting the attainment of disadvantaged pupils. Table 10, a year later, demonstrates how changes in teaching (that can support progression in learning) take time to embed and result in improved performance!

School	Intervention	Nature and Length of Engagement	Progress in 'closing the gap' for disadvantaged/others in 2014 (%)
School E	KRM Maths	Engaged in training from November 2012 and continues to use the programme	80/93 in reading 95/97 in writing **90/85 in maths**
School D	KRM Reading and Writing	Engaged in training from January 2013 to July 2014	**100/80 in reading** **100/93 in writing** 100/93 in maths
School H	KRM Maths	Engaged in training from January 2013 and continues to use the programme	85/100 in reading 92/100 in writing **85/82 in maths**
School G	KRM Reading	Engaged in training from April 2013 to July 2014	**96/93 in reading** 96/93 in writing 100/100 in maths
School F	KRM Reading	Engaged in training from April 2013 to July 2014	**81/73 in reading** 80/79 in writing 73/71 in maths
School J	KRM Reading	Engaged in training from April 2013 to July 2014	**69/79 in reading** 85/86 in writing 77/79 in maths

Table 8 : Data to indicate progress in 'closing the gap'.

School	KRM training	Extent and nature of KRM training	Proportion (%) achieving Level 2+ in 2014		
			Reading	Writing	Mathematics
School E	KRM Maths	Engaged in training from November 2012 and continues to use the programme	93	87	96
School D	KRM Reading and Writing	Engaged in training from January 2013 to July 2014	76	78	78
School H	KRM Maths	Engaged in training from January 2013 and continues to use the programme	90	87	92
School G	KRM Reading	Engaged in training from April 2013 to July 2014	71	75	93
School F	KRM Reading	Engaged in training from April 2013 to July 2014	78	64	93
School J	KRM Reading	Engaged in training from April 2013 to July 2014	73	62	84

Table 9 : Data to indicate in 2014 where KRM training (and subsequent adoption of the programme) may have influenced childrens' academic progress in Literacy (Reading and Writing) and Mathematics. Source : Ofsted Data Dashboard available at http://dashboard.ofsted.gov.uk/.

Breaking down the performance into achievement of level 2+ in reading, writing and mathematics, the following pattern (see Table 9) clarifies how School E and School H are close (reaching 93% and 90% respectively in reading).

This kind of dramatic impact, that is focussed in particular areas, rather than an improved performance across and at the culmination of KS1 and KS2 (Reading, Writing and Mathematics) requires sustained and persistently good teaching supported in various ways by visionary leadership. All the national and local mitigating factors (of rising numbers of children, more classes needing more teachers, building developments to provide sufficient classrooms, increasing numbers of lower-income families, increasing cases requiring special needs provision) all place both financial and professional strain on the school and the teachers. Effective leadership (from the Head, senior and middle leaders) demands that all these factors are considered and choices made about where to prioritise efforts. Leading a school is therefore a very complex, challenging and exacting business. Interventions such as KRM are consequently 'another' factor to explore and deliberate over to determine whether or not the 'investment' in Professional Development (PD) and altering the organisation of the day as well as the teaching approach and materials are the 'best' solution for any particular school.

The data above shows that all the schools have still missed the OCC EAP Reading at age 7 (KS 1) target of 95% achieving level 2 or above in 2014. However, given all the factors described in the background context, the following offers indications that the schools are on an upward trajectory and may be able to meet that target by 2017.

Table 10 (compared to Table 9) shows how in 2015, a year later, there are much stronger indications of improvement in the 'making progress' data. Generally performance in reading, writing and mathematics has improved a year later. Table 10 also highlights, in the final column, where there has been a 100% improvement in (valued-added) performance of some subgroups of children previously not doing so well! In all but one school, this has been achieved. Academic attainment has therefore, been improved across the ages and stages (and not just focused at the end of Key stage 1 or Key stage 2).

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School	Percentage making progress			Highlight where 100% children make 2 levels of progress as evidenced from publicly available data
	Reading	Writing	Maths	
School A	71	100	76	**100%** of all pupils (including low, mid and high attainers) make at least 2 levels of progress in writing.
School B	89	93	93	**100%** of disadvantaged pupils make at least 2 levels of progress in maths.
School C	96	100	78	**100%** of all pupils (including low, mid and high attainers) make at least 2 levels of progress in writing.
School D	93	100	97	**100%** of disadvantaged pupils make at least 2 levels of progress in writing.
School E	95	98	93	**100%** of high and low attainers make at least 2 levels of progress in writing.
School F	88	95	76	**100%** of all low and mid attainers make at least 2 levels of progress in writing.
School G	96	93	91	**100%** of all low attainers make at least 2 levels of progress in writing.
School H	87	100	92	**100%** of all pupils (including low, mid and high attainers) make at least 2 levels of progress in writing.
School I	100	97	76	**100%** of low and mid attainers make at least 2 levels of progress in reading
School J	89	89	85	**94%** middle attainers make 2 levels of progress in reading and writing.
School K	100	100	97	**100%** of disadvantaged pupils make at least 2 levels of progress in reading and writing.

Table 10 : To show the latest academic performance, of Oxford City schools, in 'making progress' in 2015 and also highlighted groups (where 100% of the) children have made 2 levels of progress (Source : Raise-on-line data available at https://www.raiseonline.org. Accessed between 13 – 15th April 2016).

A year later, scrutiny of the end of KS 2 tests indicate even more improvements on previous performances. School H and School K achieve the 84% reaching level 4 or above at age 11! School C and School G are at 81%, only 3% points behind the target set for 2016/17.

School	Percentage pupils achieving level 4 or above in reading, writing and mathematics			
	2012	2013	2014	2015
School A	45	62	48	51
School B	67	75	67	73
School C	N/A	N/A	77	81
School D	56	71	72	73
School E	65	54	76	75
School F	N/A	N/A	50	60
School G	79	75	74	81
School H	68	55	67	**85**
School I	75	61	66	66
School J	N/A	N/A	40	63
School K	70	67	85	**90**
National Average	75	75	78	80

Table 11 : The percentage pupils achieving level 4 (at the end of KS 2) year-on-year is much more positive in 2015! (Source : Raise-on-line data available at https://www.raiseonline.org. Accessed between 13 – 15th April 2016).

The general trajectory of all the schools (except for School A) appears to be on the increase.

b. Leadership for Learning

The impact of this project is detailed in Menter and McGregor (2015). Some of the highlights are indicated here.

i. Participant reactions to the programme

There was a generally positive response to the L for L programme, because nothing had previously been available for Heads and middle leaders in the locality. Several Heads thought it 'excellent' and offered something 'not previously available'.

The whole day workshops were very well received and participants thought that the materials and focus were most appropriate and covered aspects of leadership that were timely and useful.

ii. Participant learning

The Action Learning Sets (ALS) were also very well received and unexpectedly led to many positive outcomes, beyond just sharing challenges and experiences that each school faced. Participants found that they benefitted from the networking that this offered, not only to address ways of improving childrens' academic performance, but also involving parents and communities in countless ways to support learning. One of the 'softer' benefits of the interactive (and coaching-like) conversations were that all the school leaders (at all levels) became more confident and competent in their roles within school.

The culminatory posters that summarised the impact of the projects for each of the participants in the ALS revealed very interesting developments in school policy and teaching practices which included looking at quality of questioning; using video to improve feedback to teachers; how to develop shared tasks; improving speaking and listening; taking celebratory approach to storytelling; culminatory activities at transitions points involving Mad Hatters Tea Party (see Menter and McGregor 2015 for more details).

> **Quotation from an experienced Head teacher:**
>
> "We valued the opportunity afforded to us through the projects to come together as leaders of teachers working in the City. The City Council are to be praised for investing in City Schools and making us feel valued and not alone in the challenges we face."

> **Quotation from one Head Teacher who now manages a Grade 2 (Ofsted) *Good* School which was previously Graded as a Grade 4 *failing* institution :**
>
> The project has changed the language we use in the City Schools from one of defeat and blame to a *can do*, *can impact* and *can make a difference to the lives of the children in our care*".

iii.Organisational support and change

Shifts in the ways that Headteachers created more structural and specific kinds of 'spaces' for professional discussion and consideration of the challenges that each school faced were interesting. Leadership became more distributed and democratic (rather than autocratic and authoritarian). Many heads noted how their middle managers 'grew' in stature and capability.

iv.Participants use of new knowledge and skills

The Heads and Middle leaders generated a range of new skills (that included how to review, mentor, coach and develop other teachers' practices; understanding data and making informed decisions from public and within school information and generally recognising how the challenges Oxford City schools face can be tackled in a wide variety of ways).

Evidence of the ways the new skills and developing expertise was applied to leadership for learning through the L for L programme is shown in Table 12 below:

School	Ofsted Early in project	Ofsted Later in project
School B	Grade 3 Satisfactory June 2010 Raise attainment & accelerate progress in writing and maths throughout the school – particularly Reception & KS1 Improve the consistency & quality of teaching Develop the skills of leaders & managers at all levels in contributing to whole school improvement	Grade 2 Good March 2013 The **headteacher has led** the school **successfully through a period of considerable change**. He is ably **supported by an ambitious leadership team** that has made **strong contributions to improving** the school. Teaching is good and occasionally **better because teachers follow the progress of pupils very closely and accurately**. They **plan effectively** for their learning needs, especially in **literacy and numeracy.** The governing body is very **well led**, and plays a significant role in **school improvement,** particularly through its involvement in the **performance management** of staff.
School C	Grade 4 Unsatisfactory November 2011 Accelerate pupil achievement and improve the quality of teaching Consolidate the work of senior leaders and managers	Grade 2 Good March 2015 i.**Senior leaders have successfully focused on raising pupils' achievement and improving the quality of teaching** so that it is usually good with examples of outstanding practice. ii.**Teachers use marking effectively** to help pupils know how well they have done and how they can **improve** their work. iii.**Subject and key stage leaders have a good knowledge of how individual pupils are progressing** in their areas of responsibility. They **produce clear plans for further improvement**. Children in the early years provision have a good start to school. **They make good progress in all areas of learning** and are well prepared to enter Year 1.
School D	Grade 3 Satisfactory November 2010	Grade 2 Good February 2015

	Accelerate progress and lift attainment at the end of year 6 Lift attendance levels to get them as close as possible to broadly average	Since the last inspection, the **relentless focus of the previous and current headteachers on improving the quality** of teaching has been key to the school's **rapid improvement.** Most pupils make good progress because teaching is predominately good. **Teachers' expectations are much higher** and they now plan interesting lessons so pupils quickly make up for the lost ground of previous years. Governors are **skilled, knowledgeable and dedicated** to making the school the best it can possibly be. They frequently make their own checks on the **school's performance** through regular visits to classes to see pupils at work.
School E	Grade 3 Satisfactory February 2010 Improve the quality of teaching from Good to Outstanding and further accelerate pupils' progress Ensure that the progress made by all pupils is consistently good, and particularly those in Key Stage 1 Improve communication with parents	Grade 2 Good February 2013 The **strong leadership** of the headteacher, deputy headteacher and governors has successfully created a **skilled, dedicated and enthusiastic team. Significant improvements** have been made since the previous inspection. Nearly all pupils make good progress with attainment at the end of Key Stage 2.

Table 12 : Extracts from Ofsted inspection reports.

In these reports that are indications that highlight the kinds of leadership skills that were developed during and after the OCC EAP.

SECTION 6 : THE PAST, PRESENT AND EMERGING EVIDENCE FROM PUBLICLY AVAILABLE DATA

There is evidence of what can only be described as a seismic shift in one school which has been given an award as 'one of the most improved schools in the Country'. The Head of the School attributes this change to the opportunities afforded to his staff, in part, through engagement in the Leadership for Learning Programme. This School (School C) did not participate in the KRM intervention.

There is also clear evidence of the significant improvement in the (2015) KS 2 SATS performance (90% attaining level 4 or above) in a school that did not participate in the KRM programme. This achievement was closely followed by another school's performance (85% attaining level 4 or above). This school still follows the KRM philosophy.

In one School a recent Ofsted report has identified the following:

> The academy does not meet the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in reading, writing and mathematics

However, they also note that:

> Senior leaders demonstrate the capacity to drive improvement. They have taken actions to raise the quality of teaching, although these measures have only recently had a positive impact on improving standards. Senior leaders have a realistic understanding of the academy's performance and know what needs to be done to raise pupils' achievement.

This is evidence of a culture of change found even in the least improved school that participated in the project. Following engagement with the EAP leaders are' driving improvement' and 'taking action'. Interview data highlights how Headteachers talk about an improved confidence to make tough decisions, a greater awareness of what needs to be done and the self-belief that they have the skills to do it.

The general pattern is that of gradual year-on-year improvements as indicated by the tables of data included in this report. This upward trajectory in evidenced by :

Table 7 which summarises the year-on-year (2011 to 2014) improvement in reading, writing and maths at the end of KS 1 (of children aged 7).

Table 8 which indicates a mixed picture in terms of those involved in KRM and progress in 'closing the gap' for disadvantaged and all the other children. There is, however, in some indication of improvements in some schools (in 2014). For example, there were generally excellent performances at School G in Maths. At School D 100% of disadvantaged children in reading, writing and maths met expectations!

Table 9 which indicates how KRM training may have influenced the best performance at the end of KS1 in maths at School E where their numeracy programme is still followed.

Table 10 which shows the general 'developing progress' in reading, writing and mathematics (compared to 2014). It also illustrates where there is 100% improvement (through two levels) of children (final column) in all but one school.

Table 11 which illustrates how (in 2015) School K and School H have surpassed the OCC target (of 84% achieving level 4 at the end of KS 2, aged 11 years)! They as well as School C and School G are performing above the national average!

Table 12 which clearly shows the development of leadership within four schools that have improved their Ofsted grades to 'Good'.

SECTION 7 : SUMMARY : CULTURAL CHANGES AS INDICATED BY REFLECTIONS FROM SCHOOL LEADERS

Without a cultural and attitudinal shift in the schools, the improvement in attainment described in the earlier section would not be possible. What is outlined here, are additional examples of the mind-set changes that have not been previously mentioned.

i.   *Building Leadership capacity*

This 'softer' less easily measured aspect of impact was indicated throughout the schools, from the Heads, within senior leadership teams, year co-ordinators, subject co-ordinators and even Teacher Assistants (TAs). One Headteacher reported that the L for L programme had enabled them to support "TAs looking at developing their own practices and [....] become their own leaders so you move from a top down approach into a bit of versatility to be able to allow ….. people [..autonomy..] to fail sometimes and learn from their mistakes and take risks" (Headteacher of a successful school).

Other leadership skills, such as communication, awareness and empathy of others' viewpoints have also been developed as a result of the Lfor L programme, as one Headteacher said, I "think because when you first start to lead something you think it might be relatively easy but then of course when you come to an issue you then sometimes have to change your style of leadership and how you communicate ..[…] …not presume that you have been understood."

The recognition that professional space is needed for leadership teams to discuss, deliberate and decide what to do to improve the children's academic performance, as one headteacher described, "we've given our SLT …[..] a lot of management time, a lot more than other schools and so they get one day a week completely for management which for middle leaders in a school this size is a lot" (Headteacher of an Ofsted rated Good school). Other schools realise that staff can be freed up from teaching commitments to support staff development, and as another Good school Headteacher, explained, "We have a non-teaching Deputy".

The L for L programme afforded schools real opportunities to reflect and become pro-active rather than reactive in the ways they decided to implement change and development.

The style of leadership within the project schools has generally become much more *distributed* amongst senior staff as well as middle leaders. Leadership has tended to develop more widely from the previously directive or authoritarian forms. Schools have developed leadership 'teams' for a range of purposes and begun to use them in a way that was modelling ALSs in the L for L programme. One school has developed 'change teams' based on the ALS model. These teams are often comprised of a senior leader in the school, as well as more junior teaching and support staff. These teams are responsible for leading and developing new initiatives in the school. One successful example of this has been the introduction of a

Storytelling approach within a school (requiring fresh curricular and teaching materials to be developed throughout each year groups and across all the subject areas).

The collective determination to contribute to the schools success is echoed by an established Headteacher, who comments that :

> Quotation from Headteacher who has improved the school Ofsted Grade to 'Good' :
>
> "What has really helped is the attitude of our staff, who really want to be better teachers and make a difference for our pupils"

ii.   In-depth discussion about the quality of teaching and learning

The previously mentioned examples of discussion centred around impact of a 'different' pedagogy, engages teachers in thinking about the characteristics (and pragmatics) of effective practice. The sharing of experiences and exchanging ideas about different kinds of teaching, meant that ALSs offered a forum whereby, "it was just about the teaching and learning so you could formulate quality from what other people had done" (Head of a Good school). Trying out and testing new ideas and reflecting on the evidence of impact through the ALSs has really drawn staff into examining what quality teaching and learning looks like. A Head teacher from one of the 'Good' schools highlights how, "our early years coordinator, she's, I because of it ……I leadership for

> One less experienced middle school leader noted:
>
> Engagement with the project has given me an improved confidence to make tough decisions, a greater awareness of what needs to be done and the self-belief that I have the skills to do it

mean, she's re-engaged in learning mean she wouldn't be doing a masters if it wasn't for learning she wouldn't even be considering it".

iii.   Developing and applying 'coaching' strategies

Several schools have indicated how they have adopted a coaching 'attitude' to support change. Another Head teacher of a Good school has highlighted coaching saying, "it impacted a lot" and worked best where they gradually developed year on year their approach to using coaching. They also reviewed what worked well to identify what constituted 'good practice'. This school now has two specific members of staff who are responsible for coaching throughout the school.

iv.   *Networks and Collaborative working*

This appears to have been a real strength of the project. Networks and collaboration has been enhanced both within schools and across the City. There has been immediate, medium and longer term benefits from the networks developed between leaders in schools (within Oxford, Coventry and Leicester).

The ALSs (sets of leaders from different Oxford schools including a Head teachers group) were noted to be of particular use, "They were very beneficial, just to get heads out of schools and discussing cross … lots of issues and challenges" (Head of a previously 'Satisfactory', now 'Good' school).

The networks within school and across the City, can offer a way of validating potential ideas or even exploring others' experiences. As this Head teacher shared, "as an ideas sounding board and a development of a policy and plan it's still the best thing". The opportunity for discussions with other Head teachers, in a similar position, offers ways of checking out the feasibility of new ideas and possible projects or developments."

There is still networking within Oxford for the head teachers through a termly networking series of seminars run by the Oxford Collaborative Learning Project providing breakfast meetings that promote professional consideration and dialogue of current issues. It appears that the positive impact of regular meetings for Headteachers has been recognised beyond the EAP.

Within schools, senior leaders have realised how regularly creating space for staff to discuss, plan and consider (drawing on evidence to support potential projects or innovations in school) is more likely to succeed, rather than the Head teachers making isolated or individual decisions about new developments within the schools.

Across the City, one head echoed others views about the impact of the project, saying "partnership I feel at the moment is really strengthening, and …… for me what it ….it has promoted school-to-school support and the sense of sharing. We are serving the same community and actually there's so much more that we can do together".

Visiting other schools with particular strengths or expertise has also enabled developing or satisfactory schools to see how to (re)design their curriculum, teaching day or hone their parent/home communications.

v.   Recruitment (and city wide retention)

Several heads have indicated how the Leadership programme, not only supported
their personal development, but also enhanced the capabilities and skills of deputies or other senior in the schools. One said "I was growing two leaders at the time in literacy and as a have moved on in because of and other development their leaders head new terms of deputy, both of whom now one way or another…they really enjoyed it the networking element with other literacy leads deputies. They found [L for L] was good for their early and early career development.

> looking at the data …….. planning from the data how the budget should be spent, how the intervention should be organised and looking [carefully] at something that seemed a brilliant idea if it's not actually affecting the data then it's not actually fulfilling the purpose

vi.Evidence-based decision-making

Headteachers and middle leaders, recognising how looking at evidence can inform
what might and can be done. "We look at a lot of evidence-based information now,
alot more than we ever did, and one of the things that we were looking at at the moment is Homework. It is one of the most difficult things because you can't find the want". For some Headteachers it has been a challenge when they professionally know what they want to do, but they can not find the evidence to back up their ideas. In these cases, though, the network offers the opportunity to discuss with other schools what they have done and explore "what they have learnt". Talking to other Headteachers about how they have initiated change

> **A new in post Head said that she had learnt :**
>
> "understanding that everyone must have that understanding within the school and that dissemination of the understanding will take a period of time, say up to 2-3 years

> The SLT need a really good understanding and there needs to be a drive [for change]. There needs to be a key driver [the idea then] has to be disseminated, shared, [staff] mentored and coached through staff meetings, team meetings…the school improvement plan, communication with staff and that you need to return to it *and* support people. Its fine saying it, but it needs to become a whole school practice and again you are going to have to plan how you are going to do that

research you

and what they have learned from doing it is a form of evidence-based decision-making that school leaders recognise they can use "to develop themselves" (Headteacher from a *Good* school).

Recognising the value of evidence from performance data is invaluable to inform classroom teachers how they might direct and invest their energy and focus to progress specific children (or cohorts) in particular directions. This has meant some schools now collect data more than nationally required, even up to "four times a year ..[…] because we want to have the conversation", to finely tune the actions of the teachers, ensuring the best possible performance is reached in "term 5 because that is when the data has got to be in" (Headteacher from a *Good* school).

vii.Recognising change takes time.

This has been mentioned earlier in the report, but Headteachers realising that they don't have to make an immediate difference, and that taking a longer term view is likely to be more effective to sustain the improvement in attainment is a significant learning outcome from this project. The realisation, too, that there are many steps on the route of making changes and that this is the reason, change can not happen quickly, as explained from this Headteacher of a *Good* school.

SECTION 8 : CONCLUSIONS

There have been some significant improvements in pupil attainment in Oxford City Schools. The KS 1 and KS 2 'making progress' measures have improved to 100% in all but one school!

The end of KS 2 level 4+ performance has improved significantly, and two schools have met or surpassed the EAP target.

These improvements, however, are not consistent across schools. They are influenced by a range of factors, including, but not solely :

- The extent to which Headteachers have changed during the two years of the interventions;
- The extent to which teaching staff have left and been replaced by those not involved in the intervention training and development;
- The extent to which the schools have had to wrestle with national curricular changes (e.g.: the curriculum re-written for implementation in September 2014; the significant change in the SEN provision dictated by government etc etc);
- The high number of children in Oxford City primary schools;
- The increase in transience of school populations;
- The increasing proportions of FSM children; SEN children and EAL children;
- The tougher Ofsted inspection judgements informing the 'new' categories.

The above list of influencing factors are more prominent for schools in challenging circumstances (typical for some of the Oxford city schools). They understandably add complexity to the way that teaching has to be planned so that learning is successfully inclusive (and potentially maximised) for all children.

Headteachers advice for implementing new initiatives in schools :

Anything going forward there's got to be a phase… rather than rush it there's got to be a really clear phase of talking to **all** relevant people

Where the schools have longer serving Headteachers (or within school deputy) and the senior staff have not changed significantly there has generally been more of a legacy of impact.

Schools such as School C, School K, School B and School E where staffing has remained relatively stable there have been notable improvements, not only in their Ofsted grades, but also the progress within school *and* the final key stage performances in numeracy and literacy.

Where schools also engaged fully with the L for L programme there appears to have been a more significant, positive and sustained impact (eg: School C, School E, Woodfarm, School H) over (and beyond) the two years of the EAP.

Where Heads fully supported their staff to be involved in the L for L activities there was (initially) more impact (e.g: School I), but this engagement (and thus influence) waned once the Headteacher left.

The significant improvements in these schools may not be solely down to the OCC project, but have been augmented and substantially developed because of it.

Aspects of the legacy that are not directly measured through pupils' attainment and Ofsted scrutiny to determine grades, are the softer skills of :

- selecting good quality teaching (and support) staff;
- extending distributed leadership (from formerly more directive approaches);
- developing more focused 'teams' of staff for change and development;
- 'reading' and understanding (performance) data;
- diagnosing what needs to be addressed and considering what could be done;
- reviewing evidence that relates to the situation the schools are in;
- considering, contacting and networking with others in similar situations and those that are engaged with similar teaching programmes (eg: KRM mathematics; storytelling etc);
- feeling confident about data-informed-decision-making;
- self belief that improvements are possible;
- communicating more effectively with parents and the wider community.

SECTION 9 : RECOMMENDATIONS

To maintain the upward trajectory of pupils' academic performance (in reading, writing and mathematics) at KS1 and 2 the following requires ongoing consideration. Attention and active focus on the suggestions below should also support more schools achieving Good or Outstanding in Ofsted inspections.

- Maintaining the recruitment of good primary Headteachers with appropriate skills for schools in challenging circumstances within Oxford City Schools.
- Retaining good, experienced primary classroom teachers within the Oxford City area.
- Ensuring Oxford City Schools are attractive to new enthused qualified teachers.
- Continuing the increasing number of schools becoming *Good* and even *Outstanding* (according to Ofsted).
- Supporting the schools retaining *Good* and *Outstanding* once those gradings have been achieved.
- Ensuring there is *ongoing good quality* PD offers for Headteachers and classroom teachers in Oxford City schools (focused on teaching, learning *and* leadership).
- Consider more collaborative city wide (and County-wide) PD that is responsive to the schools needs. The focus of these could include :
  - Teaching (literacy and numeracy) effectively in schools in challenging circumstances
  - Understanding how formative assessment (without levels) can improve academic attainment
  - Leadership of schools in challenging circumstances
  - Sharing effective practice(s)
- Consider more regular 'networking' meetings that provide space for professional dialogue that is timely, focused and supportive for school leadership and development.
- Consider supporting leaders and teachers focused visits and/or exchanges to other Outstanding schools (locally, regionally and nationally) in challenging circumstances.
- Consider a programme of ongoing leadership-related lectures or seminars featuring eminent guest speakers that have a proven track record and are current, relevant and timely for school Headteachers, middle leaders and classroom practitioners.
- Consider ways of funding schools to develop collaborative projects that address (and seek solutions to problem-solve and remedy) their current issues.

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Appendices

School	School pseudonym within the report
Bayards Hill	School A
Church Cowley	School B
Cutteslowe	School C
East Oxford	School D
Larkrise	School E
Orchard Meadow	School F
Pegasus	School G
St Francis	School H
St John Fisher	School I
Windale	School J
Wood Farm	School K

Appendix 1 : The pseudonyms used for the 11 city primary schools involved in this report.

School	% SEN (2012)	% SEN (2014)
School A	21	12.7
School B	8.6	9
School C	10.4	14.2
School D	8.4	7.5
School E	4	3.5
School F	13.9	9.7
School G	15.6	22.1
School H	14.3	9
School I	11.1	11.5
School J	14.3	16.7
School K	10	44.5
National average (England) for primary schools	**7.9**	**7.7**

Appendix 2 : To show the changes in SEN support required in the 11 City schools over the two years of the OCC EAP intervention. Source : http://dashboard.ofsted.gov.uk/.

School	Proportion (as a %) of English not as a first language pupils in the school (in 2015)
School B	36.4
School C	32.2
School D	39.8
School E	26.6
School F	55.6
School G	46.6
School H	38
School I	28.4
School J	25.5
School K	41.2

Appendix 3 : To show the proportion of English not as a first language students in Oxford City Primary Schools in 2015. Source : Raise-on-line available at https://www.raiseonline.org

School	% FSM (2012)	% FSM (2014)
School A	43	12.7
School B	22.6	9
School C	29	35.9
School D	31	38.6
School E	19.1	30.5
School F	49.8	51.7
School G	44.4	49.6
School H	36	33.7
School I	34	33.8
School J	43.6	42.3
School K	49.8	44.5
National average (England) for primary schools	**26.2**	**26.6**

Appendix 4 : To show the changes in FSM required by the children in the 11 City schools over the two years of the OCC EAP interventional project. Source : http://dashboard.ofsted.gov.uk/

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